

COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

Pocahontas County: Chapter 4 and 3

Part (a) Letter Part of question 2

Part (3-b) Handicrafts Developed through Necessity.

OCCUPATIONS BETWEEN 1810 - 1860.

The principal industry was of course farming, but because of a growing need for them, other small industries such as blacksmithing and milling were established in all sections of the county..

The first stores were at Huntersville, but after the building of the Staunton, Parkersburg Road through the upper part of the county, and the Marlinton to Lewisburg road in the lower part of the county in 1854-56 stores opened at Greenbank, Millpoint, and soon at other points.

Since there was so much blacksmith work to be done shops sprung up all over the county.

Henry Harper who lived on Knappa Creek, having moved there soon after 1812 to a 200 acre farm owned by his father Nicholas Harper, did much to promote industry in that section. He built the first tilt hammer in this region. This shop was carried on under his personal supervision. Ralph Wenzel, George Weaver of Pendleton, and Anthony Lightner of Seago, and many others learned the trade with him, and were all good smiths. Other improvements made by him were: a tannery shop built by William Clivey, and a saw mill built by Robert and John Irvin. At his suggestion William Clivey sunk a tan yard at his home on Anthony Creek.

Henry Harper was one of the contractors for the Huntersville, Warm Springs Turnpike in 1838. But aside from all these things he went ahead with clearing land and developing his farm.

The Wenzel's - Jesse, Stephen, Ralph and John were famous smiths in the upper part of the county. Aside from ~~shodding~~ <sup>shoeing</sup> horses and repairing wagons they also made axes, hoes, shovels, plows, bulltongues, brush hooks, saw bars, sickles, broad axes, froes, grubbing hoes, pot hooks, kettle hoes, log chains, double and single trees, door hinges and latches.

William Cochran of Stony Creek built the first tilt-hammer on Swago.

Joseph Berlew of Red Lick Mountain had a blacksmith shop, a tannery, made and repaired shoes, did carpenter and cabinet work.

Thomas Drinson of near Marline Bottom made shoes.

John Burgess was a carpenter and for many years made most of the coffins needed in lower Pocahontas.

William Bradshaw of Brown Creek operated a carding machine. The bales of rolls were fastened with black thorne which grew so plentiful in this section. John Galford, Jr. conducted a flourishing tannery at Huntersville.

Rev. John Wough of Indian Draft was a skillful worker in metals. His speciality being those one of the most useful implements. He also excelled in tempering axes another implement of invaluable help to the pioneer.

John Logan of Top Alleghany was a skilled cabinet maker.

William Curry was a stone-mason. After his marriage he went to Lewis County.

George E. Whiting and his son Ebenezer Whiting of Drug Mountain were skilled masons, plasterers, and brick layers. It is reported that the mortar they used would adhere so tenaciously that sometime it had to be chipped from a brick. The smooth finish they gave plastering has not been excelled in our time with all our modern improvements.

William Hays was one of the first blacksmiths at Millpoint, working in a shop built by Valentine Cackley.

Daniels Kerr who located here soon after the Revolutionary War on the upper end of the vast estate now owned by Ulrich Hovener, established a mill, a saw mill, and a blacksmith shop on Little Back Creek branch of the main creek. His place became a center of the community.

Joshua Kee who lived one mile below Marlinton could work in iron, stone and wood. His specialty was gunsmithing, a great service to the people as so much hunting was done.

John Kee specialized in wagon making.

Nathan Burgess, a gunsmith. Many of the old hunters of the early part of the century were supplied by him with rifles. Some of his rifles were used for military service during the Civil War. One of the best specimen of his workmanship was made for the late William McNeill of Buckeye. It was reputed to be one of the most accurate in aim and far reaching of any mountain rifles ever in the country.

(Part of this material was taken from History of Pocahontas County - Price. and part of it from old papers.)